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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to assess the current situation regarding extended teacher education programs, to examine the extent to which the type of institution affects the type of teacher education program it offers, and to discover the types of degree offered at the completion of extended teacher education programs. The 664 U.S. institutions offering graduate programs in education were surveyed and institutional catalogues reviewed to determine trends regarding these programs. A total of 407 questionnaires were returned. Results suggest that: (1) the four-year baccalaureate is still overwhelmingly the most common degree for entry into the teaching profession; (2) special education is more likely than elementary or secondary education to require extended programs; (3) institutions that offer extended programs most commonly award master's degrees at the completion of such programs; and (4) research and doctorate granting universities are more likely to offer extended programs than are comprehensive and liberal arts institutions. Implications for future research include a call for a national dialogue to strengthen the teaching profession by building a stronger consensus with respect to the nature of teacher education programs. (Author/LL)

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Extended Teacher Education Programs: Is the Bandwagon Losing Its Momentum?

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Abstract

The authors surveyed the 664 U.S. institutions that offer graduate programs in education and reviewed institutional catalogues during the past decade to determine trends regarding extended teacher education programs. Results showed that: (a) the four-year baccalaureate is still overwhelmingly the most common degree for entry into the teaching profession, (b) special education is more likely than elementary or secondary to require extended programs, (c) institutions that offer extended programs most commonly award master's degrees at the completion of such programs, and (d) research and doctorate granting universities are more likely to offer extended programs than are comprehensive and liberal arts institutions. The article concludes with a call for national dialogue to strengthen the teaching profession by building a stronger consensus regarding the nature of teacher education programs.

Extended Teacher Education Programs:

Is the Bandwagon Losing Its Momentum?

During the past decade a number of proposals have emerged calling for major reform in teacher education. One common thread among most of these proposals has been the recommendation that teacher education programs extend beyond the traditional four-year baccalaureate level (AACTE, 1983; Carnegie Forum, 1986; Clifford and Guthrie, 1988; Goodlad, 1990; and the Holmes Group, 1986). Only one broadly circulated proposal has recommended that teacher education continue to be offered primarily as an undergraduate program (Johnston, et.al., 1989). And even in this proposal, there is a call to provide prospective teachers with a more integrated liberal education--one of the primary reasons most proposals recommend extended programs.

Little is presently known regarding institutional movement toward graduate teacher education. Two earlier surveys partially addressed the question of extended teacher education programs (Galluzzo, 1988; Guyton and Antonelli, 1987). Both studies concluded that schools of education[1] that offer both undergraduate and graduate education programs are responding slowly to the recommendation to extend teacher education programs beyond the four-year baccalaureate. However, in each case authors recognized that their studies did not provide adequate time following the issuance of national proposals for institutions to initiate change.

In fairness to institutions, one must conclude that the proposals regarding reform in teacher education--even those that agree on the issue of extending programs beyond the traditional four-year baccalaureate--provide little direction on how such reforms should be implemented. For example, Clifford & Guthrie (1988) clearly recommend that the baccalaureate degree be "abandoned" as the entry-level degree for the teacher profession.

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[1] In this article, "school of education" refers to a department, school, or college of education.

However, they do not suggest a degree title to replace the undergraduate degree; nor do they describe in any detail the content of such a graduate program. In contrast to the Clifford & Guthrie stance, Goodlad (1990) proposes a five-year teacher preparation program that culminates in a bachelor's degree and teacher certification, saving the master's degree for programs that lead beyond basic teacher preparation.

With a variety of proposals currently circulating, the question arises as to how institutions are responding as they plan and deliver teacher education programs. To what extent are institutions moving toward extended programs? How does the type of institution (research, doctorate granting, comprehensive, or liberal arts) affect the type of teacher education programs it offers? In addition, what types of degree titles are institutions choosing to offer at the completion of extended teacher education programs? Is the increase in the number of extended programs causing an increase in the number of master's degree titles?[2] To what extent are these degree titles affected by the type of institution in which the titles are offered.

In order to obtain answers to the previously stated questions, a national survey of schools of education was conducted. Since one of the central purposes of the survey was to assess the current situation regarding graduate teacher preparation programs, the total population of schools of education that offer graduate programs was included in the study.

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[2] The term "degree title" refers to the abbreviations used by institutions to designate the degrees they award (I.e. B.S., B.A., M.A., Ph.D.) without the inclusion of the actual discipline in which a program is housed. Thus, a school of education may offer three different M.A. degree programs, each in a different subdiscipline (i.e. counseling, educational leadership, special education), but for purposes of this study they have all counted as one degree title since the designated abbreviation (M.A.) is the same.

Method

A survey questionnaire was mailed to all 664 institutions that offer graduate program in education. These institutions were obtained from the Peterson's Guide to Graduate Programs in Business, Education, Health and Law 1989 (Moore, 1979; 1989), an annually updated reference work on graduate and professional programs offered by accredited colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.

The questionnaire contained 19 open-ended and structured questions with a list of alternatives from which the respondent could select. Four members from the intended audience (deans and faculty) reviewed the questionnaire and suggested improvements. The revised instrument was mailed to all 664 institutions. Three weeks following the initial mailing, a second wave of questionnaires with a new cover letter was mailed to those who had not responded.

A total of 407 (61%) questionnaires were returned, including those from the second mailing. The frequency of responses to each question has been totaled and reported by percentage. The institutions were categorized using the Carnegie classification of institutions of higher learning (Carnegie Foundation, 1987). The percentage of non-responding research, doctorate granting, comprehensive universities, and liberal arts colleges did not differ more than two percentage points from those responding institutions. This result gives some assurance that the sample of responses received is representative of the population.

Results and Discussion

Types of Teacher Preparation Programs

There are approximately 1,250 institutions that offer teacher education programs in the country. Approximately one-half offer graduate degree programs, while the other half award only undergraduate degrees. In spite of the recommendations over the past decade

for teacher educators to extend their programs beyond the four-year baccalaureate, teacher education is still predominantly offered at the undergraduate level (see Figure 1).

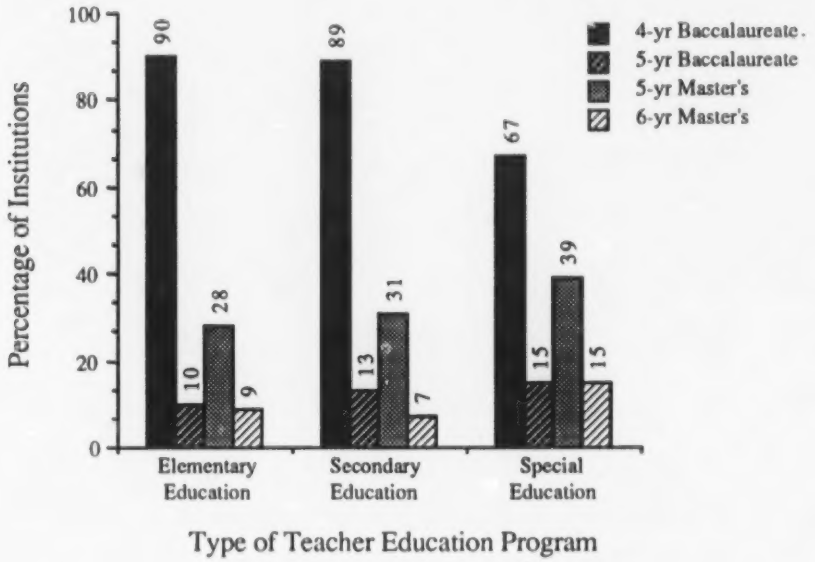

Figure 1. Types of baccalaureate and master's teacher preparation programs.

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents could select more than one response.

Approximately nine out of ten institutions reported that they offer elementary and secondary programs at the four-year baccalaureate level. This finding shows that although the responding institutions all offer graduate programs in education, a large percentage are continuing to offer elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs at the four-year baccalaureate level. Figure 1 shows that many institutions offer more than one type of teacher preparation program in each of the specialty areas. Some of these extended programs cater to for "late deciders"--students who enter the school of education already holding a bachelor's degree in some other discipline. In certain of these cases it is probable

that the alternative routes to teacher certification would have smaller enrollments than an institution's main program, which is offered at the undergraduate level.

While the ratio between extended and nonextended programs is similar for elementary and secondary programs, Figure 1 shows that special education programs are less frequently offered at the four-year baccalaureate level. However, the percentages of extended programs in special education do not differ as much from those in elementary and secondary education as one might expect. This finding gives further evidence that institutions offer primary programs in which most students are enrolled and alternative programs in which relatively few are enrolled.

Since respondents could select more than one option on the question regarding types of programs, further analysis was conducted to determine precisely how many institutions offered only four-year programs, a combination of four-year and extended programs, or only extended programs. As shown in Figure 2, over half of the institutions offer elementary and secondary programs only at the four-year level; slightly more than a third offer such programs at both the four-year and extended levels; and about 10% offer only extended programs.

It is important to keep in mind that the roughly 600 institutions not included in the sample offer teacher preparation at the baccalaureate level. This, of course, does not preclude these institutions from offering extended programs culminating in a bachelor's degree, but given the data from the current sample, the percentage of these nonparticipating institutions which offer *only* extended programs would likely be very low.

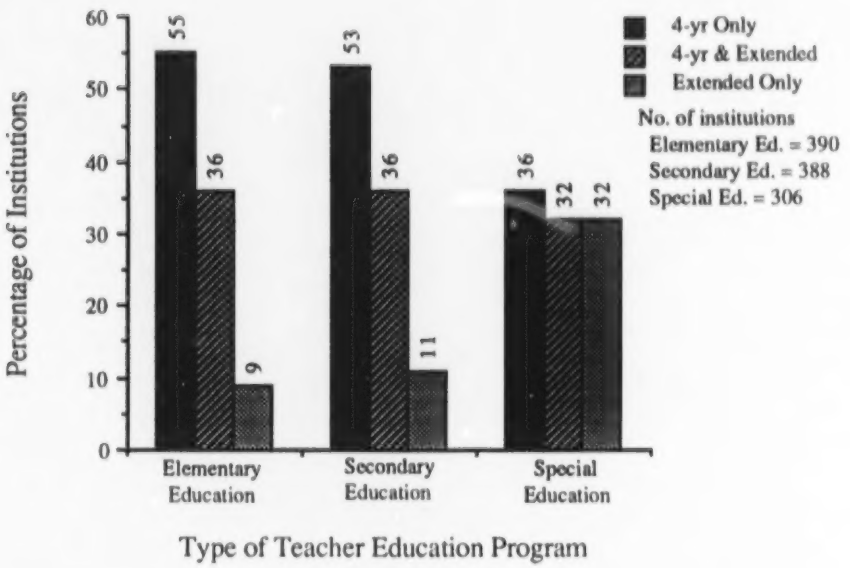

Figure 2. Percentages of institutions offering four-year and extended teacher education programs.

Figure 2 further shows that special education is much more likely to be offered as an extended program. These findings are interesting when compared with those in Figure 1. Predictably, even though Figure 1 shows that a similar percentage of special education and elementary or secondary programs are offered beyond the four-year level, Figure 2 shows that special education is at least three times more likely than elementary or secondary to be offered *only* as an extended program. Although the questionnaire did not require respondents to indicate reasons for offering each specialty as an extended or nonextended program, one might deduce that the greater movement toward extended programs in special education has little to do with current proposals for reform in teacher education--since the institutions that offer special education as an extended program continue to offer elementary and secondary programs primarily at the four-year level.

The findings in this study show that during the past four years there has been little change in the inclination of universities to offer teacher education only at the extended level. For example, Guyton and Antonelli (1987) found that 74% of their respondents ranked moving teacher education to the post-baccalaureate level as being of low importance. In explaining their findings, they concluded that adequate time might not have passed between the initial calls for reform and the mailing of their questionnaire. However, even four years after their survey, institutions seem no more inclined to abandon the four-year baccalaureate for teacher preparation programs.

Although this study did not investigate the reasons for not abandoning the four-year baccalaureate, others have pointed to several important factors. For example, Weinstein (1989) has emphasized the economic impact on institutions of extending teacher education programs. Graduate programs, which require lower student-faculty ratios and additional mentoring responsibilities, are clearly more expensive than typical undergraduate programs. In addition, Schneider (1983, 1987) has argued that institutional constraints, especially in research universities, often make it difficult to inaugurate new graduate programs.

Types of institutions. Figure 3 shows that research and doctorate granting institutions are more than twice as likely to offer elementary education only as an extended program than are comprehensive or liberal arts colleges. The figure also shows that moving from research to liberal arts colleges, there is a gradual increase in the percentage of institutions offering elementary education programs at the four-year level only, while there is little variance in the percentages of institutions offering such programs at both the four-year and extended levels.

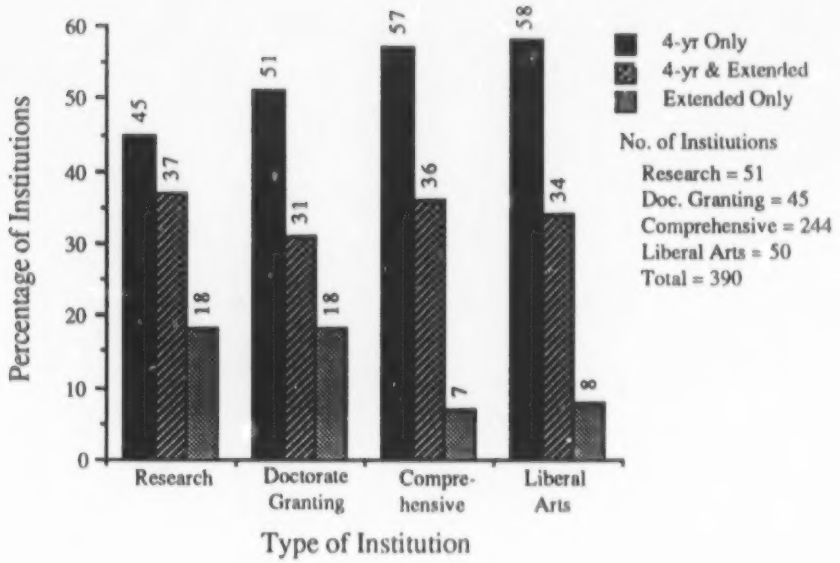

Figure 3. Percentages of institutions offering four-year and extended elementary education program.

Similarly, four-year only secondary teacher education programs are most common at all types of institutions except research institutions, which are more likely to offer both four-year and extended programs (see Figure 4). As with the elementary programs, research and doctorate granting institutions are more likely than comprehensive and liberal arts colleges to offer secondary teacher education programs as extended programs only. This may be a natural consequence of the influence of the Holmes Group, since its membership is focused on research universities, rather than comprehensive or liberal arts colleges.

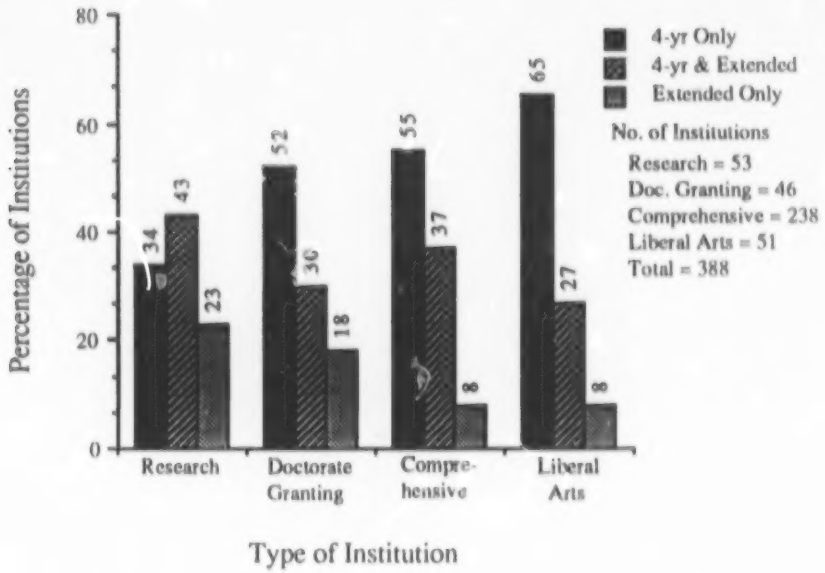

Figure 4. Percentages of institutions offering four-year and extended secondary teacher education programs.

As stated earlier, unlike elementary and secondary programs, special education programs are more commonly offered beyond the baccalaureate level. Figure 5 shows that special education programs at the four-year and four-year with extension levels are relatively common among all types of institutions except research institutions. More than half of all research institutions reported offering special education programs at the extended level only. In all categories for all programs, this is the only result that shows institutional preference for extended programs over four-year programs.

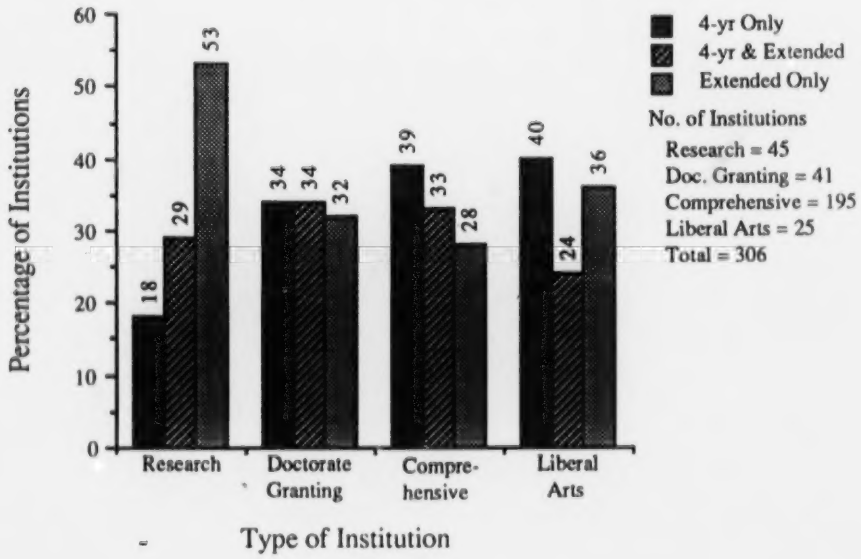

Figure 5. Percentages of institutions offering four-year and extended special education programs.

Degree Titles

According to Osguthorpe, Zhou and Schneider (1989), the number of graduate degree titles in teacher education has increased dramatically between 1979 and 1989. Today there are approximately 120 degree titles awarded in the education field. For the purpose of this study, the most common degree titles offered in education are grouped as B.A./B.S., M.S./M.A., M.Ed./M.S.Ed./M.A.Ed., M.A.T./M.T./M.S.T. and others.

Because teacher education is still predominantly offered at the undergraduate level, the B.A. and B.S. are the most common degrees awarded by schools of education. In 1989, 86% of the institutions offered the B.A. or B.S. in elementary education, 87% in secondary education, and 55% in special education (see Figure 6).

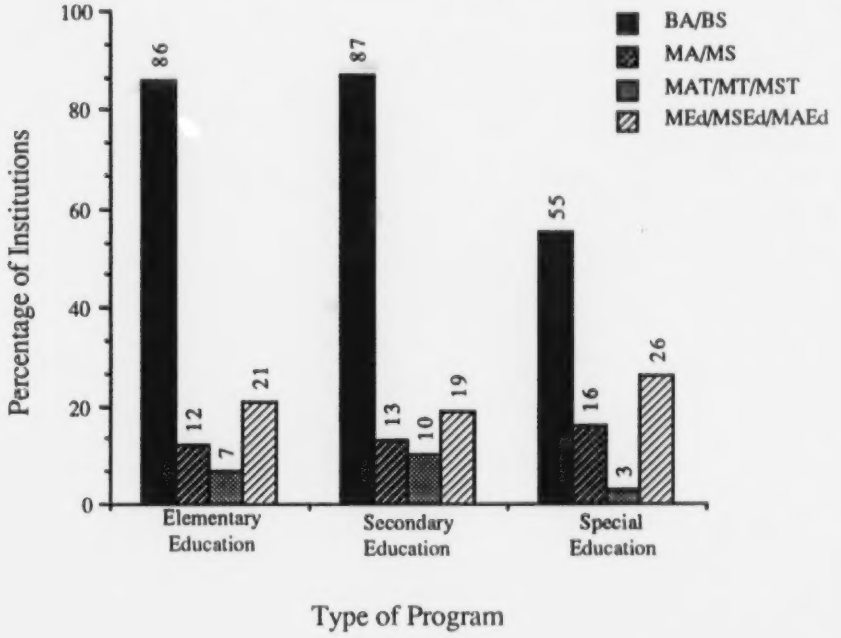

Figure 6. Types of degrees awarded for teacher education programs.

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents could select more than one response.

The results of this survey show that the degrees created uniquely for education (i.e. M.Ed., M.S.Ed. and M.A.Ed.) are the degrees most frequently awarded at the conclusion of extended teacher preparation programs, followed by the M.A./M.S. and finally, the M.A.T./M.T./M.S.T. It is interesting to note that the M.A.T. degree, originally designed for baccalaureate recipients in the arts and sciences who wished to obtain a teaching certificate, has not been frequently adopted by institutions. Even though the M.Ed. was traditionally targeted for experienced teachers who wished to develop additional expertise, it has become the most frequent choice of institutions as the degree to award at the conclusion of teacher preparation programs in elementary, secondary, and special education.

Combining the findings in Figure 6 with those in Figure 1, one may conclude that institutions that do offer extended programs are most likely to offer them as five-year master's programs terminating in the M.Ed. degree. Six year master's programs and five-year baccalaureate programs are much less frequently offered. Thus it appears that the field is following neither the counsel of Clifford and Guthrie (1988) nor that of Goodlad (1990). Institutions that launch extended programs are slow to give up their four-year nonextended programs, and when they do offer extended programs, they are more likely to award a master's degree than the baccalaureate Goodlad recommends.

Recommendations

The findings in this study indicate a need for a greater consensus among professional educators regarding teacher preparation programs. It is not uncommon for one institution to offer three or more teacher education options--each with varying requirements leading to differently titled degrees. This is clearly not the way to build the profession.

Students, employers, and practicing teachers, as well as university faculty, are confused by the current array of programs to prepare teachers. Other professions, including law, business, and medicine, have a much stronger tradition of unity regarding professional programs and basic requirements for the titles of their degrees. The field of education must begin working to build a similar tradition.

Administrators, faculty, and students must join in analyzing current teacher preparation programs and debate the relative advantages and disadvantages of extended versus nonextended programs. Even though most national organizations have publicly announced their support of the move to extended programs, the field as a whole is not responding. In fact, certain institutions in the present study which had experimented with offering teacher preparation at the extended level were in the process of reinstating a four-year baccalaureate program.

The factors affecting program decisions are complex and often misunderstood in the field. Further research needs to be conducted to clarify these factors. Additional case studies need to be developed of those institutions that have recently begun offering programs only at the extended level, as well as those institutions that have a longer history with such programs. This study did not address detailed requirements associated with extended and nonextended programs. It is evident that the field itself is often confused over the terms, and it is not inconceivable that one institution's "extended" program may be less rigorous than another institution's "four-year" program. It might even be that the average time required to complete certain extended programs is shorter than that required for certain nonextended programs, depending upon each institution's general education program and other requirements it imposes on all students. A national dialogue focusing on these issues is essential if the field of teacher education is to develop the unity necessary to bring meaning to its academic programs and increased recognition to the teaching profession.

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